

### Remarks

Claims 1-2, 4-7 and 20-23 are now pending. Claims 1 and 2 have been amended to elect a single general inventive concept. Claims 3, 8, and 24 should be considered withdrawn accordingly. Claim 5 has been amended for clarity. No new matter is introduced into the claims by these amendments.

Claims 1-8 and 20-24 were rejected as anticipated by, or in the alternative, as obvious over Shimomura et al. (JP 05213646 abstract) or EP 859011 (De Baynast et al.). This rejection has become moot in view of the amendments by the Applicants.

Neither Shimomura et al. nor De Baynast et al. suggest a cementitious composition which comprises a cellulose ether having Claim 1's claimed ethylene oxide molar substitution  $MS_{\text{hydroxyethoxyl}}$  and percentage of unsubstituted anhydroglucose units. Furthermore, neither Shimomura et al. nor De Baynast et al. suggest a cementitious composition which comprises a cellulose ether having a hydroxyethoxyl substituent which has been introduced into the cellulose material in two or more stages, as claimed in Claim 2.

The cementitious composition as claimed in Claims 1 and 2 and the claims dependent thereon unexpectedly have a low degree of cement retardation, as explained on page 7, lines 13-27 and as shown in Table 1 on pages 31 and 32.

If the Examiner has any questions, he is encouraged to contact the undersigned.

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